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## **NORTHWEST REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH BOARD, INC.**

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Central Naugatuck Valley Catchment Area Council #20  
Housatonic Mental Health Catchment Area Council #21  
Northwest Mental Health Catchment Area Council #22

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Testimony for the  
**Insurance and Real Estate Committee**  
**Regarding Raised bill #202**  
**"AAC Health Insurance Coverage for telemedicine services"**

By Janine Sullivan-Wiley  
Executive Director, Northwest Regional Mental Health Board, Inc.  
March 6, 2014

My name is Janine Sullivan-Wiley, and I am the Executive Director of the Northwest Regional Mental Health Board. The Regional Boards represent the grassroots and all of the stakeholders of mental health and substance abuse services. We conduct evaluations and **assess the unmet needs for behavioral health services in our communities**. We work to address stigma against people with behavioral health disorders, noting that stigma is a barrier to treatment and recovery. We try to assure that policy and funding decisions are consistent with what we see at the local and regional levels.

First, thank you to Rep. Rob Sampson for taking the time to respond to my email inquiries about this issue after it was raised by one of our Catchment Area Council members, Clementina Cardow, our Beacon Falls town representative.

At our Board meeting this morning we discussed this bill and the issue of telemedicine in general. I am pleased to be able to submit my – and our – **support for this bill**.

**We note that there will be many technical details to be resolved in implementation.** However, it has the potential to bring essential services to **two specific and under-served demographics: people from cultural and linguistic minorities and people for whom transportation to appropriate services is a barrier.**

Telemedicine clearly reflects the potential benefit of internet-based communication technology.

We also suggest that **there be stipulation that any participating providers will still have to follow all of Connecticut's regulatory policies and regulations.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

